IN THE CLAIMS

For the convenience of the Examiner, all pending claims of the Application are reproduced below.

1. (Previously Presented) A method for processing a request using one or more database units coupled to a network, comprising:

communicating a request for a record to a central server;

receiving the request;

communicating the request to one or more nodes, wherein one or more of the nodes is operable to provide an interface between one or more associated database units and a network, and wherein one or more of the nodes is operable to communicate with each other;

identifying one or more target database units that store the record, wherein the central server is operable to identify one or more of the target database units, the central server comprising information indicating a location of the record that is included within one or more of the database units;

accessing the record, which is stored in one or more of the target database units;

processing the request based on the record that is stored in one or more of the target database units such that a response to the request is generated; and

returning the response to the request that is based on the record, which is stored in one or more of the target database units.

2. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein identifying comprises using a hashing algorithm to identify a location of the record within one or more of the target database units.

3. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising querying one or more of the nodes for data relating to an age characteristic associated with the record.

4. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising providing an index in at least one of the nodes, the index comprising information associated with locations of one or more records, wherein one or more of the nodes may access the index to identify one or more of the target database units that store the record.

5. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein processing comprises performing an operation on the record that facilitates generation of the response, each of the nodes being operable to perform the operation and the operation being selected from the group consisting of:

a) modifying;

b) deleting;

c) copying;

d) printing; and

e) structured query language (SQL) commands.

6. (Original) The method of Claim 5, further comprising communicating an updated record after the operation is performed on the record to one or more of the target database units.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising coupling one or more web servers to one or more of the nodes, the web servers facilitating communications between the network and one or more of the database units.

9. (Previously Presented) Software embodied in a computer readable media for processing a request using one or more database units coupled to a network, the software operable to:

communicate a request for a record to a central server;

receive the request;

communicate the request to one or more nodes, wherein one or more of the nodes is operable to provide an interface between one or more associated database units and a network, and wherein one or more of the nodes is operable to communicate with each other;

identify one or more target database units that store the record, wherein the central server is operable to identify one or more of the target database units, the central server comprising information indicating a location of the record that is included within one or more of the database units;

access the record, which is stored in one or more of the target database units;

process the request based on the record that is stored in one or more of the target database units such that a response to the request is generated; and

return the response to the request that is based on the record, which is stored in one or more of the target database units.

10. (Original) The software of Claim 9, further operable to use a hashing algorithm to identify a location of the record within one or more of the target database units.

11. (Original) The software of Claim 9, further operable to query one or more of the nodes for data relating to an age characteristic associated with the record.

12. (Original) The software of Claim 9, further operable to provide an index, the index comprising information associated with locations of one or more records, wherein one or more of the nodes may access the index to identify one or more of the target database units that store the record.

13. (Original) The software of Claim 9, further operable to perform an operation on the record that facilitates generation of the response, each of the nodes including software operable to perform the operation, the operation being selected from the group consisting of:

a) modifying;

b) deleting;

c) copying;

d) printing; and

e) structured query language (SQL) commands.

14. (Original) The software of Claim 13, further operable to communicate an updated record after the operation is performed on the record to one or more of the target database units.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Original) The software of Claim 9, further operable to couple one or more web servers to one or more of the nodes, the web servers facilitating communications between the network and one or more of the database units.

17. (Previously Presented) A system for processing a request using one or more database units coupled to a network, comprising:

means for communicating a request for a record to a central server;

means for receiving the request;

means for communicating the request to one or more nodes, wherein one or more of the nodes is operable to provide an interface between one or more associated database units and a network, and wherein one or more of the nodes is operable to communicate with each other;

means for identifying one or more target database units that store the record, wherein the central server is operable to identify one or more of the target database units, the central server comprising information indicating a location of the record that is included within one or more of the database units;

means for accessing the record, which is stored in one or more of the target database units;

means for processing the request based on the record that is stored in one or more of the target database units such that a response to the request is generated; and

means for returning the response to the request that is based on the record that is stored in one or more of the target database units.

18. (Original) The system of Claim 17, wherein the means for identifying comprises means for using a hashing algorithm to identify a location of the record within one or more of the target database units.

19. (Original) The system of Claim 17, further comprising means for querying one or more of the nodes for data relating to an age characteristic associated with the record.

20. (Original) The system of Claim 17, further comprising means for providing an index in at least one of the nodes, the index comprising information associated with locations of one or more records, wherein one or more of the nodes may access the index to identify one or more of the target database units that store the record.

21. (Original) The system of Claim 17, wherein the means for processing comprises means for performing an operation on the record that facilitates generation of the response, each of the nodes being operable to perform the operation, the operation being selected from the group consisting of:

a) modifying;

b) deleting;

c) copying;

d) printing; and

e) structured query language (SQL) commands.

22. (Original) The system of Claim 21, further comprising means for communicating an updated record after the operation is performed on the record to one or more of the target database units.

23. (Canceled)

24. (Original) The system of Claim 17, further comprising means for coupling one or more web servers to one or more of the nodes, the web servers facilitating communications between the network and one or more of the database units.

25. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for processing a request using one or more database units coupled to a network, comprising:

one or more database units coupled to a network;

one or more nodes, each of the nodes being coupled to a respective database unit ; and

a central server operable to receive a request for a record, one or more of the nodes being operable to provide an interface between one or more of the database units and the network and to communicate with each other to identify one or more target database units that store the record, wherein the central server is operable to identify one or more of the target database units, the central server comprising information indicating a location of the record that is included within one or more of the database units, and wherein the target database units may be accessed by one or more of the nodes to process the record that is stored in one of the target database units such that a response to the request is generated.

26. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 25, wherein one or more of the nodes comprises a hashing algorithm operable to identify a location of the record within one or more of the target database units.

27. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 25, wherein one or more of the nodes comprises an index operable to identify an age characteristic associated with the record and to identify a location of the record.

28. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 25, wherein one or more of the nodes are further operable to perform an operation on the record that facilitates generation of the response, and wherein the operation is selected from the group consisting of:

a) modifying;

b) deleting;

c) copying;

d) printing; and

e) structured query language (SQL) commands.

29. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 28, wherein one or more of the nodes are further operable to communicate an updated record after the operation is performed on the record to one or more of the database units.

30. (Canceled)

31. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 25, further comprising one or more web servers coupled to one or more of the nodes and operable to facilitate communications between the network and one or more of the database units.